A Brief Account OF THE Socinian Trinity.

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

June, 1694.

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LONDON:

Printed for *Charles Brome*, at the *Gun*, *West-End* of St. *Paul's*, 1695.

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A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE Socinian Trinity.

In a LETTER to a FRIEND.

SIR,

THE *Socinians* hold a *Trinity* as well as we: They have lately Publiſhed *Bidle's Confeſſion of Faith touching the Holy Trinity.* But in the Explanation of this is all the diffe-

rence: He, and one part of the *Socinians*, make the *Second* and *Third* Persons to be *Creatures*, wherein they are guilty of a very groſs ſort of *Idolatry*, beyond what was acknowledged by any of the *Heathens*, To join *Creatures* into one *Holy Trinity* with *God*, and to *Baptize* Men into the Faith and Worſhip of *Creatures*. The *Arians* could never anſwer the Charge of *Idolatry* in giving Divine Honour to *Chriſt*, while they acknowledged him to be but a *Creature*: Nor can the *Worſhip* of *Chriſt*, ſuppoſing him but a *Creature*, be excuſed from *Idolatry*, by any manner of way, which will not at the ſame time juſtifie the Excuſes not only of the *Church of Rome*, but of the *Heathens* themſelves for their *Idolatry*.

Another ſort of *Socinians* deny the *Second* and *Third* of the *Trinity* to be *Perſons*: And make them no more than the *Power* and *Wiſdom* of *God*, one call'd

call'd his *VVord*, the other his *Spirit*, but yet that they are *nothing different from God*; as by a Man's *Spirit*, you mean the Man himſelf. Thus the *Brief Hiſtory of the Uni-tarians*.

But, by this Rule, they cannot ſtop at a *Trinity* in *God*, but muſt go thro' all his Attributes, *Juſtice*, *Mercy*, *Providence*, *Omnipotence*, *Eternity*, and Twenty more; and inſtead of the *Three in Heaven* (which they acknowledge) they muſt go to a *Fourth*, *Fifth*, *Sixth*, and without End.

In the next Place, where it is ſaid, *John* 1. 14. *The VVord was made Fleſh*, they ſay that no *Perſon* was made *Fleſh*: This *Second* of the *Trinity* they ſay is not a *Perſon*, but only God's *Power*, or the *Manifeſtation* of his *Power*, which they ſay *Inhabited* an Humane Perſon; *i. e.* the Perſon of *Jeſus Chriſt*.

So God *Inhabited* or *Inſpired* the *Prophets*, *Apoſtles*, &c. but this did not make Him to become *Fleſh*.

But he inſpired Chriſt in a *Higher Degree*.

The *Degree* ſignifies nothing as to the being made *Fleſh*. No *Inſpiration* or *Inhabitation* of God, or any thing leſs than an *Imperſonation*; *i. e.* taking our Fleſh into his own *Perſon*, ſo as to be one *Perſon* with him, nothing leſs than this can make him to be *Fleſh*.

And it is certain that nothing can be made *Fleſh* but a *Perſon*. A *Manifeſtation* of God, or of any thing elſe, is nothing in it ſelf; it is but our manner of Apprehending what is *manifeſted* or *ſhewn* to us: And to talk of this being made *Fleſh*, is the groſeſt Nonſence and Contradiction: Therefore if there be but *One Perſon* in the *Trinity* (as this Sett of *Socinians* do hold) then the *whole Trinity* was made *Fleſh*;

and

and then they muſt come to *Muggleton*, who ſays, as they do, that there is but One *Perſon* in the *Godhead*, which is God the *Father*; and that *He* was *Incarnate*, and really *Died*, ſo that there was then no God: But *Muggleton* ſays that *Elijah* govern'd in his abſence, Rais'd him from the Dead, and Reſtor'd him his Throne, and then He was God again.

But, on the other hand, if there be Three *Perſons* in the *Holy Trinity* (as the reſt of our *Socinians* do hold) But the *Second* and *Third* only *Creatures*, and that the *Word* (the *Second* Perſon) was *Incarnate*; then they muſt anſwer for their *Idolatry*, in Worſhiping a meer *Creature*; and anſwer the Cloud of Texts which require and atteſt Divine Honor to be due to *Chriſt*, and Command the very *Angels of God* to *Worſhip* Him.

But, to turn again to those *Socinians* who will have but one *Person* in the *Trinity*, they put this Meaning upon *Matth.* 28. 19. that we are Baptized in the Name of the *Father*, and of the *Son* (who is the self-same *Person* with the Father) and of the *Holy Ghost* (who is the same *Person* with them Both.)

Again, *Matth.* 12. 32. if you sin against *one* of these you shall be forgiven; but if you sin against *another* (who is the very same with that *one*) you shall not be forgiven.

Now, I pray you, compare their *Trinity* and ours. They make *Three in Heaven* who are not *only Three*, but may be *Threescore*, and yet all but one and the self-same *Person*.

We acknowledge the *Three in Heaven*, whom the Scriptures tell us of, to be *only Three*, and that they are *Three Persons*.

One

One of theſe was made *Fleſh*, the *other* not, yet they will not allow them to be different *Perſons*, but that He who took Fleſh, and He who did not take Fleſh were the ſame, or that they were not *Two*.

Theſe are the Men who cry out upon *Myſteries*; and pretend to Explain their Faith wholly by *Reaſon* and *Demonſtration*, and to make it eaſie and intelligible to the meaneſt Underſtanding!

Beſides, they differ more (if more can be) betwixt one another, than they do from us. What greater difference can there be concerning the *Object* of our *Worſhip* than *one* to make it *GOD*, the *other* but a *Creature*? As it is among the *Socinians*, in their Opinion of the *Second*, and *Third* in the *Holy Trinity*. What greater difference, than for one to ſay they are *Perſons*, another *no Perſons*? One

to

to say they are *Adorable*, the other *not*? Must not one of these think the other *Idolaters*? And the other think them *Profane*, and Erroneous *in Faith*, who deny Divine Honour to whom it is Due?

These call themselves *Unitarians*; yet there is not, nor can be in the World, greater *Division*, and at farther distance, than betwixt the several sorts of these, who own themselves by one *Name*, and would have the World believe that they have the same *Faith*: Which, when so contradictory to it self, it can be Ill expected to agree with the *Holy Scriptures*, and with the *Holy Catholick Church*.

We acknowledge a Great and Sublime *Mystery* in the *Holy Trinity* of GOD: That is a *Mystery* to us, which exceeds our Understanding. And many such *Mysteries* there are,

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to us, in the *Nature* of *God* which we all acknowledge; A *First Cause* without a *Beginning*! A Being which neither *made it self*, nor was made *by any other*! *Infinite* without *Extension*! In *every place*, yet circumscrib'd in *no place*! *Eternal* and *Perpetually Existing*, without any *Succession*! a *Present*, without *Past*, or *Future*! and many other such *un-Explainable*, *un-Intelligible*, *Incomprehensible Mysteries*; which yet hinder not our Belief of a *God*. And therefore not being able *fully* and *clearly* to explain the *Trinity*, which is the most *hidden* and *secret* Attribute of the Nature of *God*, can be no Reason for us to reject such Revelation which *God* has given us of Himself. Yet do we not want several *Shadows* and *Resemblances* of one *Nature* communicating it self to many *Individuals*, without either a *Multiplication* or *Division* of the *Nature*. We say that the

Soul

Soul is *all* in *all*, and *all* in *every part* of the *Body*; yet that the *Soul* is neither *Multiplied* nor *Divided* among the ſeveral *Members* of the *Body*. It is impoſſible for us either to *Explain* this, or to *Deny* it; for we *feel* it to be ſo, though it is wholly *unconceivable* to us *how it can be*. Now if the *Soul*, which is but an *Image* of *God*, at an Infinite diſtance, can communicate it ſelf to ſeveral *Members*, without breach of its *Unity*; why ſhould it be Impoſſible for the *Eternal* and *Infinite Mind* to communicate it ſelf to ſeveral *Perſons*, without breach of its *Unity*; I will be bold to ſay, you will not find ſo near a *Parallel* in *Nature* whereby to conceive of God's *Eternity*, or his *Infinity*, as this, and a great many more, whereby we may conceive of His *Trinity* and *Unity*, by what we feel in our ſelves, and ſee in a thouſand things that are

before

before us. We ſee *Extenſion* not *Divided* but *Diſtinguiſh'd* into its three *Dimenſions*; and Communicating its *whole Nature* to *each* of the *Three*, for *Each* is *Extenſion*; and yet there is but *one Extenſion* in all the *Three*.

The *Soul* is not *Divided* betwixt its ſeveral *Faculties*; they remain perfectly *diſtinguiſh'd*, though not *divided* from one another: To *underſtand* what is *preſent*, is a quite different thing from *Remembring* what is *Paſt*; and to *Love* or *Hate*, is different from both of theſe; yet theſe Three Faculties, the *Underſtanding*, the *Memory*, and the *Will*, partake all equally of the ſame *Soul*.

Light and *Heat* are ſo *different*, that ſome are capable of the *One*, who are not of the *Other*; and yet they are not *Divided* in the *Sun*; but flow *equally* and *naturally* from it without any *Diviſion* of its *Nature*.

I ſay

I ſay not that any of theſe *Parallels* do come up to the full explanation of the Communication of the *Divine Nature* to ſeveral *Perſons*, without any *Diviſion* or *Multiplication* of the *Nature*: But I am ſure they take away the *Contradiction* alledged to be in it, while we ſee the ſame *Difficulty* in our own and other Natures, which we can as little Explain.

But, inſtead of ſolving this difficulty, the *Socinians* have made it a downright and Irreconcileable *Contradiction*. They would have *Three* to be *One* and the ſelf-ſame *Perſon*. This cannot be ſav'd from a *Contradiction*. They acknowledge the *Three in Heaven*, the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Spirit*. If theſe are *one* and the ſelf-ſame *Perſon*, they cannot be *Three*. If they are one *Nature*, and ſeveral *Perſons*; this is a *Difficulty*, it is a *Myſtery*; but it is no *Contradiction*,

Contradiction, becauſe they are not *One* and *Three* in the *ſame reſpect*; for that is neceſſary to make it a *Contradiction*. In *one Reſpect*, that is of their *Nature*, they are *One*; in an *other Reſpect*, that is, of their *Perſons*, they are *Three*. But if they are *One* in *Perſon*, as well as in *Nature*; and yet are *Three* (as theſe *Socinians* do confeſs) then they are *Three* and *One*, in the *ſelf-ſame Reſpect*, which is a full *Contradiction*.

FINIS.